

## We must mobilise pressure and fear to save Darfur

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History will regard the situation in Darfur, Sudan, as an African holocaust if the international community fails to protect innocent lives. The African Union's decision late last week to extend its mandate in Darfur has bought just three more months for the rest of the world to persuade Sudanese leaders not to start another round of slaughter.

Khartoum still refuses to agree to let United Nations peacekeepers take over from the AU troops when they go home. The UN Security Council voted last month to deploy 20,000 peace-keepers to replace the AU troops; the Sudanese government immediately rejected that resolution and announced that the AU had no authority to transfer its mission to the UN.

Then Sudan began to fan out more than 30,000 of its troops, allegedly to bring peace and stability to Darfur and to protect civilians. Imagine if Hitler had offered to "protect" Europe's Jews. As a Holocaust survivor, I cannot think of a more despicable act than to have Khartoum send soldiers - who have raped and slaughtered thousands and displaced 2m people - to "protect" -civilians.

Evidence is mounting that the Sudanese government is positioning air and ground forces to complete the genocide in Darfur that began three years ago. There is ample reason to fear a full-scale and imminent onslaught against civilians.

The US government declaration calling the situation in Darfur genocide and a growing international civilian movement raised the expectations of the helpless. But we have failed to galvanise sufficient global commitment to protect victims of genocide. The May 5 signing of the Darfur peace agreement seemed to offer a ray of hope that the darkest days were behind the innocent men, women and children of Darfur. But that agreement is now on the verge of collapse because of resurgent violence.

The international community must put actions behind its now myriad words and commit to civilian protection by supporting the transition of the AU mission to the UN. Nato must also broaden its support to the AU through this perilous and crucial transition to a UN peacekeeping mission that should deploy with or without the consent of the Sudanese government.

The past few years have shown that two things move Khartoum - pressure and fear. After September 11 2001, the thugs in the government there feared the consequences of harbouring Osama bin Laden and his terrorist cohorts, and they began to co-operate in the war against terrorism.

We must now mobilise those two powerful factors in the interest of civilian protection in Darfur, hold Khartoum's leaders accountable for the atrocities that continue to take place and make sure that Darfurians can return safely to their homes.

Whether to end genocide in Darfur is not a choice for Khartoum to make; it is a requirement to avoid not only international condemnation and isolation, but also an imposed civilian protection regime. I was proud to author a resolution calling on George W. Bush, the US president, to take immediate steps to help improve the security situation in Darfur, with a specific emphasis on civilian protection.

If Khartoum continues to reject the deployment of UN peacekeepers, an imposed civilian protection regime in Darfur should be the priority of the AU, the UN, Nato, the European Union and the US government. I will continue to push for the immediate deployment of Nato assets as part of a transitional operation to stop the atrocities while the UN forces are deployed. If Khartoum persists in pursuing genocide, I support military action to neutralise those military forces employed by Sudan to attack civilians or to inhibit peacekeepers from their deployment.

Khartoum must be made to understand that there will be severe consequences for a further genocidal assault on the people of Darfur. Its reaction to the Security Council resolution authorising a peacekeeping operation is no surprise. Neither is its attempt to bully the AU into submission by issuing an ultimatum for the union to reject the UN resolution or leave Darfur.

Evidently, the world needs reminding that the genocide in Darfur is not just an African crisis. It is a crisis for all humanity and obliges all of us to act with urgency. Words without deeds betray the people of Darfur.

The writer is the senior Democrat on the House International Relations Committee and the founding co-chairman of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus

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